

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-25 are pending. Claims 1, 11-13 and 21-25, which are independent, are hereby amended. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification.

No new matter has been introduced. It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. Changes to the claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,585,838 to Lawler, et al. (hereinafter, merely "Lawler") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,790,198 to Roop, et al. (hereinafter, merely "Roop") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,598,075 to Ogdon et al. (hereinafter, merely "Ogdon").

III. RESPONSE TO REJECTIONS

Applicants respectfully submit that Ogdon is not prior art.

This application is filed on April 27, 2001, which is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 08/946,524 filed on October 7, 1997, which claims a priority to Japanese Patent Priority No. 08-270916 filed on October 14, 1996 and Japanese Patent Priority No. 9-233647 filed on August 29, 1997.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims in this application are supported by Japanese Patent Priority No. 08-270916 filed on October 14, 1996. Therefore, this application has a priority date of October 14, 1996.

Ogdon was filed on September 29, 2000, which is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/052,862 that claims a priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/041,770 filed on March 31, 1997.

Applicants respectfully submit that Ogdon's Provisional Application filing date of March 31, 1997 is after the priority date of this application. Therefore, Ogdon is not a prior art.

Therefore, Applicants submit that each of the above rejections based upon Ogdon is invalid.

Therefore, claims 1-25 are patentable.

CONCLUSION

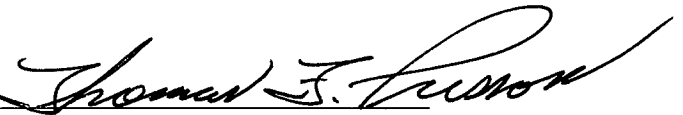
In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosure in the cited reference, or references, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the reference, or references, providing the basis for a contrary view.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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